

12-3-2020

Insights Fall 2020 - Full Issue

Follow this and additional works at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/insights>

Recommended Citation

(2020) "Insights Fall 2020 - Full Issue," *Insights*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 15 , Article 1.

Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/insights/vol1/iss15/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Alumni Publications at Via Sapientiae. It has been accepted for inclusion in Insights by an authorized editor of Via Sapientiae. For more information, please contact digitalservices@depaul.edu.

INSIGHTS

A PUBLICATION FOR COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

FALL 2020

RESILIENCE & SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

LAS

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



DEPAUL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

Education as a Social Act

What must be done? What must we do? What must you do? What must I do? Our mission can mean many things to many people, but at the core, the college always arrives at the act of educating. That is what we do!

Coincidentally, if we take any of the many challenges we now face as a society and think about ways to address them, it will take little time to arrive at the fundamental need for education. We need to educate scientists who develop vaccines. We need to educate nurses who take care of the sick. We need to educate public health and social workers who help us understand and address the many symptoms of health disparities and inequities in our society. We need to educate historians and writers and artists to help us document, understand and interpret the moment we are living through. We need to educate everyone to listen to and honor the dignity of one another, to be empathic with others' experiences and struggles. We need to educate leaders to lead us into a better tomorrow. And we must stand against racism in all that we do.

Education in this context is not simply the delivery of knowledge—it is a social act, through which we help to build a resilient, compassionate, effective and moral community.

In the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (LAS), we are committed to that mission, and the pandemic has shown us how amazingly resilient we can be in meeting that commitment. Even while physically distancing, we continue to educate. The efforts deployed by our faculty and staff last spring quarter were extraordinary. We pivoted quickly and effectively from curricula delivered mainly on campus to curricula delivered mainly online. Our long track record of excellence in technology-mediated education has



served us well, and continues to do so as we keep the safety of our students as our top priority.

In the past, we have celebrated how our LAS faculty and staff have spoken on behalf of the voiceless. In this issue of Insights, we celebrate how they are helping our students find their own voices in times of social unrest.

Because of our new digital format, in this issue you will not only read about how our students wrote a communal poem about the Black Lives Matter movement but also be able to see and hear them perform their pantoum. I am sure you will feel the same sense of pride and hope that I felt when I heard them for the first time.

Our alumni continue to be a critical part of all we do. You continue to support our LAS family with your amazing testimonials, advocacy and financial resources. As you review this issue of Insights, please make use of the feedback button you will find at the end of every story to make your voice heard.

May the liberal arts be with you!

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Guillermo".

Guillermo Vásquez de Velasco, Dean

Office of Alumni Relations
alumni.depaul.edu

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
las.depaul.edu
lasdeanoffice@depaul.edu

Editor
Abigail Pickus

Designer
Francis Paola Lea

Stay connected to DePaul through our online communities, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr and YouTube.

Visit alumni.depaul.edu to sign up today.



DePaul Helping Communities

Daniel J. Schober, assistant professor of public health, and Megan Alderden, associate professor and director of criminology, have been named to Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot's Public Safety Research Advisory Council (PSRAC). The newly formed council, part of the city's violence reduction strategy, is made up of researchers from academic institutions across Chicago. "I am honored to serve on the PSRAC," says Schober. "They have been looking to researchers and scholars who can offer a perspective on how to best measure process. The goal is systemic change, particularly in the areas of Chicago most affected by violence."



Daniel J. Schober



Megan Alderden

In addition, thanks to years of activism from intersex and trans leaders, including by **Pidgeon Pagonis (Women's and Gender Studies '10, MA '14)**, Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago has become the first medical institution in the United States to commit to ending genital surgeries on intersex children. Lurie also issued a public apology to any intersex people harmed by their treatments.

Faculty in the News

Ester Trujillo, assistant professor in the Department of Latin American and Latino Studies, was named a 2020 Career Enhancement Fellow by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. The foundation seeks to increase the presence of minority junior faculty members committed to eradicating racial disparities in the arts and humanities.



Ester Trujillo

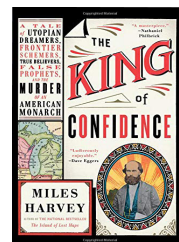


Gift from the Gates Foundation

The School of Public Service has received a \$200,000 grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support a donor-advised funds data collaborative that aims to streamline how data are shared between fund sponsors and researchers.

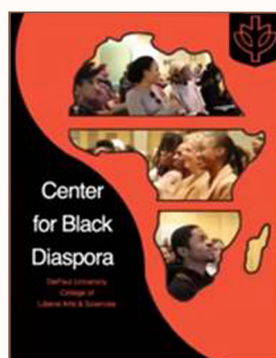
LAS Faculty Making Headlines

Looking for a good book? Look no further than DePaul's LAS faculty. Lit 50: Who Really Books in Chicago 2020, the annual list put together by the Chicago monthly Newcity, features [Chris Green](#), [Miles Harvey](#) and [Erika Sánchez](#), as well as **Mikki Kendall (Writing and Publishing MA '14)**. Kathleen Rooney is such a regular that she has been moved to its Hall of Fame category.



Faculty Publications

- "The King of Confidence," a nonfiction account of con artist James Strang by English Professor Miles Harvey (Little, Brown).
- "Avalon," new poems by English Professor Richard Jones (Green Linden Press).
- "Are They Too Hard on Them? Student Discipline in Charter and Regular Public Schools" by Nandhini Gulasingam, senior analyst at the Faculty Scholarship Collaborative and emeritus geography faculty, and Public Policy Professor William Sampson (Information Age Publishing).
- "Archaeologies of the Heart," an anthology about care-based archaeology practices edited by Jane Baxter, associate professor of anthropology (Springer).



Coming Attractions

This summer, incoming students previewed LAS online



With the pandemic prohibiting in-person learning and campus visits, the college offered an assortment of creative online offerings this summer to give newly admitted DePaul students a taste of the LAS experience.

"This mini-course was nothing short of amazing," says Jane Baxter, associate professor and chair of the Department of Anthropology, who facilitated five weekly lessons in the Zoom course Critical Perspectives on Our Current Moment.

The course gave students an opportunity to think about current events, such as the pandemic and racial equity, from an interdisciplinary perspective. Twenty-two incoming students from across the country zoomed in weekly to delve deeper into everything from The Social Contract, co-taught by political science and geography faculty, to Equity and Justice in a Time of Pandemic, co-taught by political science and public health faculty.

"These students are looking for an opportunity to express themselves in ways that are intellectual as well as emotional. They're thinking hard. They are so cognizant and aware of what is going on in the world, not just where they are, but beyond themselves. This course has offered them a chance to really make connections with other students in other places with ideas that are coming from new sources. It's amazing how they're so hungry and ready for this kind of engagement. It's these experiences that are so motivating and exciting for us as instructors," adds Baxter, a recipient of an LAS Excellence in Teaching Award.

At the end of the course, students designed a multimedia project in which they mapped their journey of learning over five weeks of the pandemic. The idea was inspired by CityLab's call for people to map their quarantine experiences. Each week, students shared updates to their maps on Instagram. Final projects were compiled into a video presentation. [View one here.](#)

LAS Resources for a Diverse Incoming Class

The Center for Black Diaspora and the Center for Latino Research launched two video meetings this summer to welcome incoming students from communities of color interested in majoring in the humanities and social sciences.

"When you're a freshman, it's all very intimidating. That's why we wanted to reach out that hand to say, 'This is a good place for you. We're going to be here with support and resources,'" says faculty co-sponsor Bill Johnson González, director of the Center for Latino Research and an associate professor of English.

The sessions put a focus on LAS academic programs in African and Black Diaspora Studies, Latin American and Latino Studies, and Global Asian Studies, as well as resources from the Office of Multicultural Student Success, the Center for Black Diaspora and the Center for Latino Research. Incoming students got to meet and hear from current students and faculty. They also saw inspiring short videos from alumni who talked about life after DePaul.

Disassembly

A pantoum written by DePaul students on the fight for racial equality

Insights asked Chris Green, senior professional lecturer in the English Department, and LAS students Caley Koch and Jada Ward to share their thoughts on the poem "Disassembly."

Chris Green

It's an honor to have inspired Caley Koch and the powerful poem "Disassembly." Caley was a student of mine, as were some of the other exceptional student-poets in the pantoum. What impresses me is their honesty and great moral concern. Our country needs more truth, more collaboration—something like this poem where diverse people sing together in sanity and beauty. When politics fails us, poetry tells us we are not alone in our outrage and hope.

With this in mind, I edited a book-length pantoum, "American Gun: A Poem by 100 Chicagoans," which is a collective response to the individual suffering behind Chicago's gun violence and the model for Caley's poems. I asked 100 poets from across the city to take turns writing a communal poem. The book was published this year by Big Shoulders Books, the press housed within DePaul's Department of English. The press's mission is to

give voice to communities in the city that don't normally have one. Then we give the books away for free.

Chris Green a senior professional lecturer in English.

Visit bigshouldersbooks.com to order free copies of "American Gun."

Caley Koch

Inspired by Chris Green's "American Gun: A Poem by 100 Chicagoans," "Disassembly" advocates for the Black Lives Matter movement and chooses to celebrate difference by collaborative means. "Disassembly" is written as a traditional pantoum, yet is unique with the inclusion of nine different writers, some of whom are DePaul students and alumni. The repetition of lines weaves each individual voice together and is reliant on the diversity of writers' segments. Each stanza, though taken from the previous, is shaped into a new perspective on the fight for racial equality in America.

**"ONE VOICE IS NOT
LOUD ENOUGH TO LEAD
CHANGE; BY ITS PURE
NATURE, PROGRESS IS
CHORAL."**

—Caley Koch

The killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and countless others awakened white Americans to the historic and systemic violence that still plagues Black Americans today. True to its name, "Disassembly" breaks apart and examines these injustices. One voice is not loud enough to lead change; by its pure nature, progress is choral. In addition to the variety of voices, "Disassembly" is in black and white to limit all immediate judgment—the subconscious assumptions that root racial divisions—and portray the writers as one.

The idea of writing a collaborative poem about racial inequality was largely inspired by my relationship with one of my closest friends, who is African American. Until I encountered the Black Lives Matter movement, the racial differences in our upbringing never crossed my mind. I wanted to honor how unbreakable and supportive our friendship has always been by featuring her and other influential friends in "Disassembly." To me, this poem exudes what is essential now: strength and understanding.

In writing the poem, it was important to me that everyone had a chance to say exactly what they wanted without limitations or judgment. I think the best part of the whole process was watching the poem grow longer day by day and seeing the vast spectrum of ideas flow from one writer to the next. I was overwhelmed with how eager everyone was to share their ideas and how respectful and empathetic they were of what we all had to say. That compassionate attitude, to me, is what I wish everyone would exemplify in such a divided time.

Caley Koch is a senior majoring in creative writing and cello performance, with a minor in Spanish.

Jada Ward

It started with a text message that I got from Caley Koch saying, "With everything that's happening [with Black Lives Matter], do you guys want to do a poem to express your thoughts?" Everybody thought that was a great idea.

We worked together on a Google doc. Caley wrote the first four lines, and the next person kept the second and the fourth line of her first stanza and then added their two lines, etc.

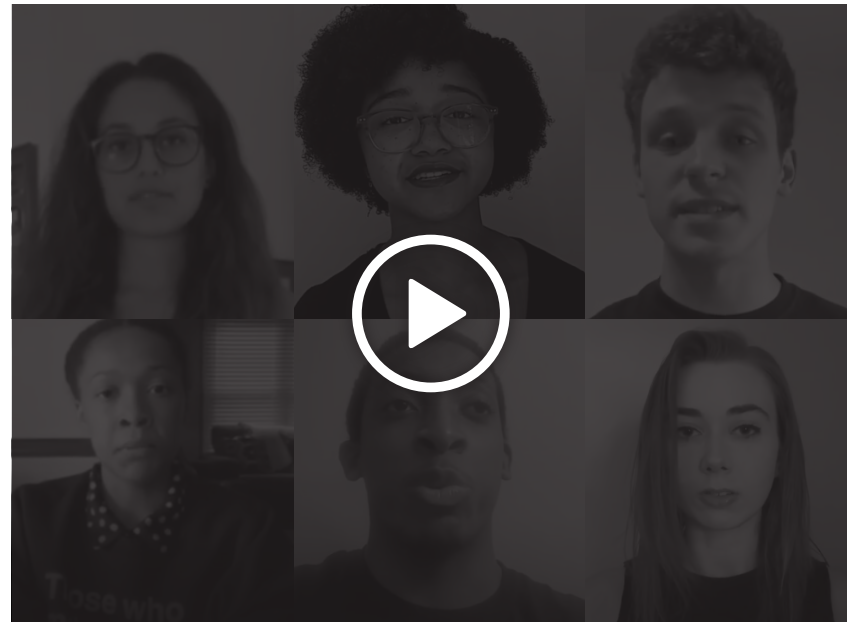
There were moments where it was challenging, but we all kind of had the same general idea of what we wanted to talk about. And I think it was just really beautiful to watch it expand into something bigger. There were a lot of people talking about their feelings, and then there were a lot of people talking about change and what change would look like and how we could get there.

If you can't think about freedom, or if you don't have any ideas of what freedom looks like, then how can you achieve it? If you want a better world, you first have to envision a better world and what it looks like. And I think writing really helps me do that, because I don't know if the work that I create or if the work that somebody else creates can influence somebody who does something amazing later on in their life.

Sometimes the power of words, sometimes just hearing somebody voice something that you've always felt but never been able to explain—it's just really amazing because you know that you're not alone out there.

When we think about revolution, we often think about physical things. We often think about demonstrations and protests and all of these other things. But it's not a short race; it's a marathon. And you need many different people doing many different things in order to make a revolution work.

Jada Ward (Creative Writing '20) is pursuing a Master of Public Health degree from DePaul's College of Science and Health.



Students, many of whom are from LAS, came together to write and perform the pantoum "Disassembly."

Pride of Heritage



LAS alumna Michelle Morales (Latin American Studies '97) is president of the Woods Fund.

DePaul opened up a whole new world for Michelle Morales (Latin American Studies '97). "As a first-generation college student and graduate, it was a scary and transformational experience all at once. It was the first time I was in similar spaces with kids from very different socioeconomic backgrounds. It was a profound opportunity and learning period for me as to how I fit into society," says Morales.

Morales' parents are from Puerto Rico, and because her father was in the military, Morales spent her youth on army bases, mainly in Germany and Indianapolis.

DePaul appealed to her because it was in a big city, but she also was looking for something else. "A major criterion for me was that there was a Puerto Rican community," Morales says.

In her sophomore year, Morales discovered the Department of Latin American Studies. "I just fell in love with it," she says. "It was one inflection point in my development as a person and a leader. It helped me to establish my identity and really understand who I am as a Puerto Rican woman and how I fit into the whole Latinx reality and experience in the United States."

After graduating, Morales taught at an alternative high school in Humboldt Park that focuses on Puerto Rican history and culture. "I learned so much more about my own identity and culture, while also using much of what I learned in Latin American Studies," she says.

She soon became an administrator for a network of alternative schools in Chicago. From there, she joined Mikva Challenge, the Chicago-headquartered youth civics empowerment program, and led its Chicago chapter.

In 2019, Morales became the third Latina woman to be named president of the Woods Fund, a midsize foundation that supports community organizing and public policy advocacy. One of its primary commitments is racial equity.

"This moment in time presents a really profound opportunity for so many of us in different sectors," says Morales. "We must open ourselves up to reimagining what an equitable society could look like and to figuring out the policies and practices that need to be put in place in Chicago to make sure every single one of its residents is set up for success."

Looking ahead, she sees herself becoming president of an even larger foundation. In the meantime, Morales is content with where she is now. "I turned 45 this summer. I have been going full steam ahead for so long, and now I'm trying to pay attention to what is really important to me, such as my family," says Morales, who lives in Chicago with her husband and teenage son.

One thing is certain: DePaul has deeply influenced her. "My Latin American Studies major really defined the rest of my life. I honestly don't know where I would be today, academically or professionally, without it," she says.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been hard—but it has been harder on vulnerable populations

The Inequality of Illness

Multiple LAS faculty received grants from DePaul to pursue different studies that analyze health equity and COVID-19.

Traci Schlesinger, associate professor of sociology, is examining the impact of changes in policies to limit the spread of COVID-19 in prisons on the spread and deadliness of the disease in state and federal prisons and in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facilities.

Limited access to soap and hygiene facilities, the inability to socially distance and a medically vulnerable population all increase detainees' risk of contracting and dying from the disease. As a result, since March, more than 80% of the nation's top 25 hot spots for COVID-19 have been prisons or jails, according to Schlesinger.

For her project, Schlesinger examined whether policies and practices, such as providing personal protective equipment (PPE) to incarcerated people, halting admissions and releasing medically vulnerable people or those who are nearing the end of their sentence, have led to either

significant levels of decarceration or a slowing of the spread of COVID-19 in these facilities.

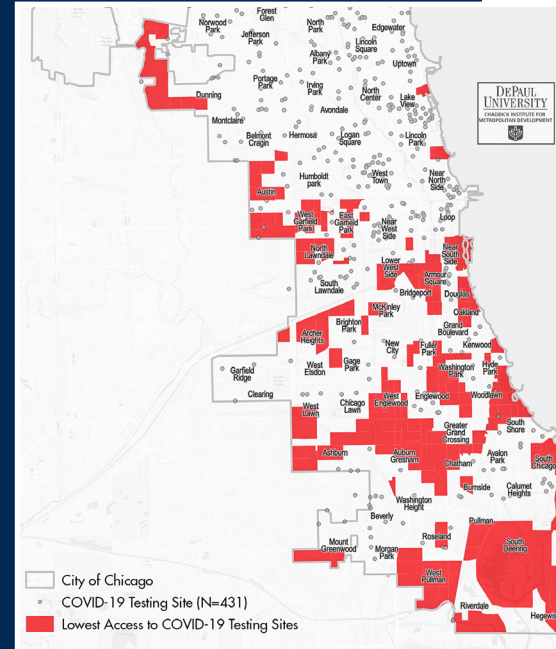
"The question becomes, what are the effects of each of these policies? How do these policies, which are being applied a lot, a little or not at all in various states, affect this pandemic?"

Schlesinger intends to make her data available to the public.

Euan Hague, professor of geography and director of the School of Public Service (SPS), is part of a team investigating the extent to which race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and previous health conditions explain the disparities in outcomes from COVID-19 in Chicago.

According to recent data, individuals in counties that are majority African American are three times more likely to get infected and six times more likely to die from COVID-19 than those living in majority white counties. In the City of Chicago, African Americans are dying from coronavirus at six times the rate of whites.

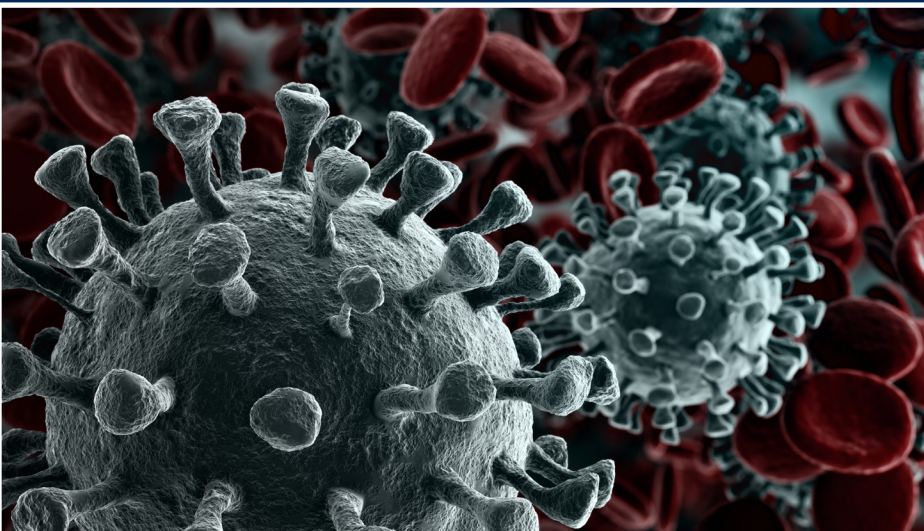
The project is a collaboration between units within LAS's Urban Collaborative:



Data for this map taken from Illinois Department of Public Health, Chicago Department of Public Health and Electronic Lab Reporting.

SPS, the Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development and the Center for Community Health Equity, the latter co-founded by DePaul and Rush University Medical Center. The team, which includes Hague, Joe Schwieterman, a professor in SPS and director of the Chaddick Institute, C. Scott Smith, assistant director of the Chaddick Institute, and GIS Coordinator Cassandra Follet, is comparing data on neighborhood demographics, gender, race, income and education level with COVID-19 patient data from Rush.

Using various spatial and statistical techniques, they have identified and mapped highly vulnerable neighborhoods in the city. They have also developed a multimodal model to estimate access to COVID-19 testing facilities. The team will also be working to better understand disease transmission dynamics on different travel modes in order to predict the effectiveness of different public health interventions.



LAS faculty are researching the intersection between health equity and COVID-19.

NOW WE MUST.

The Campaign for DePaul's Students

DEPAUL STUDENTS FACE INCREASING UNCERTAINTY ABOUT COMPLETING THEIR EDUCATION.

Now We Must will provide our students with the resources to keep their aspirations within reach during extraordinarily challenging times.

Your gift to DePaul supports urgent student needs:

- Scholarships & Financial Aid
- Emergency Assistance Funding
- Technology & Access
- Internship Funding
- Mental Health & Wellness Support

Make a gift today.

Visit give.depaul.edu/NowWeMust, or contact the Office of Advancement at (312) 362-8666 or giving@depaul.edu.

